

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIA-15 IO-10 MMO-04 PA-02 PRS-01

/049 W

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R 191515Z DEC 75

FM AMCONSUL FLORENCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1254

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS FLORENCE 0490

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL IT

SUBJECT: FLORENCE AND THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL

1. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CELEBRATIONS IN FLORENCE IS A LARGE RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE MAYOR FOR THE FOREIGN RESIDENTS OF THIS CITY. IN ADDITION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF FOREIGNERS LIVING HERE, THE RECEPTION IS ALSO ATTENDED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND RESIDENTS. THIS YEAR (DECEMBER 16), THE WELCOMING ADDRESS OF FLORENCE'S NEW COMMUNIST MAYOR HIGHLIGHTED THE DESIRE OF THE CITY OFFICIALS OF FLORENCE TO ORGANIZE IN 1976 A CELEBRATION COMMEMORATING THE BICENTENNIAL OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. THE MAYOR DWELT ON THIS AT SOME LENGTH AS A MEANS OF WIDENING AND STRENGTHENING THE FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THIS PART OF ITALY AND THE UNITED STATES AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD SINCE 1776. IN ADDITION, THE MAYOR STATED THAT THE CITY OF FLORENCE WISHED TO STRENGTHEN AND BROADEN ITS 'SISTER CITY' RELATIONSHIP WITH PHILADELPHIA AND THAT THE CITY OF FLORENCE WAS INVITING THE MAYOR OF PHILADELPHIA OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE TO COME TO FLORENCE TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER AND TO GIVE ADVICE CONCERNING THE FLORENCE CELEBRATION OF THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL.

2. FOLLOWING THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE FLORENCE TOURIST ORGANIZATION (A SOCIALIST) ADDRESSED THE AUDIENCE IN A SIMILAR VEIN.

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3. AFTER THEIR REMARKS, THE MAYOR AND THE TOURIST ORGANIZATION PRESIDENT TOLD ME THAT THE CITY OF FLORENCE IS VERY SINCERE ABOUT THIS MATTER AND THAT THEY HOPED THAT WE COULD WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THE FLORENCE CELEBRATION A GREAT SUCCESS.

4. ON DECEMBER 17, THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THE MAYOR'S REMARKS RATHER EXTENSIVELY. IN ADDITION TO THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER 'LA NAZIONE', HIS REMARKS WERE WELL COVERED BY THE LOCAL SECTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER 'L'UNITA' AND THE COMMUNIST CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER 'PAESE SERA'.

5. AT AN EVENING SESSION ON DECEMBER 17, THE FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL VOTED TO HAVE AN OFFICIAL CELEBRATION IN FLORENCE IN 1976 COMMEMORATING THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL.

6. COMMENT. IT IS VERY CLEAR BOTH FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICIAL REMARKS AND HIS PERSONAL COMMENTS TO ME THAT THE COMMUNIST CONTROLLED CITY GOVERNMENT OF FLORENCE WISHES IT TO BE NOTED THAT ITS OFFICIALS WISH TO CONTINUE AND TO EXPAND FLORENCE'S CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. GORDON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS, CULTURAL EXCHANGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975FLOREN00490
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750442-0226
From: FLORENCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751225/aaaaavkt.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 MAR 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <09 FEB 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FLORENCE AND THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL
TAGS: SCUL, IT, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006